



**For Immediate Release
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**STATE ANNOUNCES AVAILABILITY OF APPLICATIONS FOR
VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE GRANTS**

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) today announced the availability of applications for the latest round of 2006 Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grants.

The grants are available to non-profit rural call or volunteer fire departments that primarily serve a community or city with a population of less than 10,000. The fire department must be made up of at least eighty percent (80%) call or volunteer firefighters and be recognized as a department under state law.

“We are pleased to once again make these funds available to rural call or volunteer fire departments that provide an invaluable service to their respective communities,” said DCR Commissioner Stephen H. Burrington. “This year’s program will provide funding for firefighter safety, rural fire defense and technology transfer.”

A total of \$71,961 is available through this grant program (\$38,000 from Cooperative Fire Protection monies and \$33,961 from the National Fire Plan’s “Communities at Risk” fund), which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and administered by DCR. Successful applicants bear the full cost of the project up to \$4,000, then apply for reimbursement of up to one half of that cost. Total reimbursement shall not exceed \$2,000.

Communities may apply for either or both the Cooperative Fire Protection (CFP) and the National Fire Plan's (NFP) funds at this time. Applications for this year’s VFA grant program have been mailed to Forest Wardens in qualifying towns. Towns that qualify for funding that have not yet received an application should contact the DCR Forest Fire Control Program Coordinator at 413-538-9092.

Completed applications are due by October 16, 2006, and should be mailed to: DCR Forest Fire Control Program Coordinator, Hampton Ponds State Park, 1048 North Road/Route 202, Westfield, MA, 01085.

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